

**Remarks at a Reception for
Senatorial Candidate Mark Kennedy
in Minneapolis, Minnesota**

December 9, 2005

Thanks for coming. Thank you all. I appreciate the warm reception. *[Laughter]* This is a Senator Kennedy I can work with. I have come because I know Mark, and I know he is going to make a great United States Senator for the people of Minnesota.

He's a down-to-earth fellow. After all, he was raised in rural Minnesota. He brings commonsense values to Washington, DC. He's not one of these kind of fancy guys; he's a guy that gets the job done. He focuses on results. He works on behalf of the people. He'll make a great United States Senator from Minnesota.

Laura sends her love. Mark and I both married above ourselves. *[Laughter]* I'm proud to be up here with Debbie Kennedy as well. I met the—Sarah—the Kennedy family, if you don't know it, is quite large. *[Laughter]* If they all vote—*[laughter]*—it's a landslide. *[Laughter]* But Laura sends her very best.

One of the important things about running for office is to have a family that stands with you. It can be a little lonely out there at times. But there's nothing better than coming home to a great wife, and in Mark's case, and a family that dearly loves him. One reason to send Mark Kennedy to the United States Senate is, he understands the importance of family in our society today.

I want to thank the Governor of your great state, Tim Pawlenty, for being here. He's a fine man and doing a great job as Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor who is here. I want to thank all the State and local officials.

I want to thank my friend Norm Coleman. Congressman Jim Ramstad is with us today. Jim, I appreciate you coming—newlywed, I might add. Mark and I flew over with Congressman John Kline. You talk about a patriot and a good man who needs to be reelected to the United States Congress.

I want to thank a longtime family friend of ours, Rudy Boschwitz for his great leadership. I appreciate the Boschwitz family for being here. All the Boschwitz boys. *[Laugh-*

ter] And they didn't ask for any advice, but I gave it, and I said, "Listen to your mother." *[Laughter]* Mark, you need to be listening to yours too. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Thank you all for coming. Here's the deal. It's important to contribute like you have. But your contributions are going to be needed to win this campaign, and these are contributions of talking to your neighbors, going to your community centers and houses of worship and places you work, and telling people that when you've got somebody who's honest and decent like Mark Kennedy, they need to send him to the United States Senate for the good of all people of Minnesota.

So I want to thank you for what you have done for this good man and what you're going to do. I know he's going to work hard. He was just telling me today how many parades he's marched in. *[Laughter]* That's a lot, by the way. *[Laughter]* Showed me that old football schedules that he passes out. *[Laughter]* He's a grassroots-type fellow, gets down to where the people are. He tells them what's on his mind, and when he says something, he does it. And that's the kind of people we need in Washington, DC.

I also look forward to working with Mark. We're facing—we're living in historic times. These are dangerous times, and they're times of great opportunity. And I'm looking forward to working with Senator Mark Kennedy to secure this country, to do our duty in Washington, DC, and do everything we can to protect the people.

Our lives and the life of our Nation changed on September the 11th, 2001, and we must never forget the lessons of that day. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize. There's an enemy—*[applause]*. We have got to see the world the way it is, not the way we'd like it to be. There is an enemy which hates America. They hate us because we stand for what they don't believe in. We believe in freedom. We believe in the freedom for people to worship any way they want in the United States of America. We believe that people can speak their mind freely. We believe that people can write their editorials the way they want to write them. We believe in freedom, and we're not going to change.

And we face an enemy that has got an ideology and a strategy and a tactical plan to achieve their strategy. These people have hijacked a great religion and turned it to their advantage—they think. They're trying to spread a totalitarian empire from Indonesia to Spain. How do I know? Because they've told us. They've told us pointblank what they're looking for. They're trying to drive the United States out of the Middle East so they can take over other countries to spread their dark view of the world. They want safe haven from which to launch attacks.

Think about Afghanistan. They had achieved their objective for a short period of time. They had taken over Afghanistan so they could plot and plan their attacks, one of which was the September the 11th attack. I told the world—and I meant it, “If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist.” Our troops liberated the people of Afghanistan and routed the Taliban. And that part of the world is better off, and our country is more secure because democracy has taken hold in Afghanistan.

The enemy has made it abundantly clear that Iraq is a central front in their war against humanity. That's what they've said. And our Nation must understand that Iraq is the central front in the war against the terrorists. And that's why we have—we're there for one reason, and that is to achieve a victory, to make America more secure.

We took the threat seriously, and we removed that threat. And now our strategy is twofold. On the one hand, we're helping the brave Iraqis establish a democracy. Any way you look at it, these people that lived under the brutal thumb of a tyrant have made incredible progress. They had January elections. They approved a Constitution. And next week, they're voting for a 4-year Government. Democracy is making progress because of the courage of the Iraqi people.

And the second prong of our strategy is to train Iraqis so they can take the fight to the enemy, so they can bring people to justice. And we're making progress there as well. Of course, it's been uneven at times. But it's important for you to know that the Iraqis want to secure their democracy, and democracy helps make this world more peaceful.

Now, there's a debate raging in Washington, DC. There are some who are arguing for a fixed timetable of withdrawal. I think it's the wrong policy, and so does Mark Kennedy. A fixed timetable of withdrawal would embolden the enemy, would confuse the Iraqis, and would send the wrong signal to our young men and women in uniform. The United States of America—[*applause*].

We have got a strategy for victory, and we'll see that strategy through. We will defeat the terrorists in Iraq. We will not let Al Qaida take a stronghold—get a stronghold in Iraq. We'll help this country develop a democracy, which will send a powerful signal to people in Damascus and Tehran.

Our short-term objective is to stay on the hunt and bring the killers to justice before they hurt us again. I'd rather be defeating them there than facing them here at home. And our long-term objective is to spread the power of democracy and freedom.

You know, I recently went to the Far East, as you may know, and visited with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. He's a good fellow, and he's a good friend. It struck me then, like it has in previous times, about how ironic it is, in a way, that the son of an 18-year-old Navy fighter pilot who fought the Japanese is now talking peace with the leader of a country that was our sworn enemy. Think about that for a minute. Sixty years ago, a lot of folks, a lot of your relatives, signed up to fight an enemy that attacked us. By the way, we lost more people on September the 11th than we did when Pearl Harbor was bombed. And a lot of people went and fought, and there was a lot of death and destruction. And yet, 60 years later—which seems like a long time when you're 59—[*laughter*]—but it's really not all that long in the march of history—I'm talking with Prime Minister Koizumi about how to keep the peace. So something happened between the time that my dad and your relatives signed up in World War II, and I'm talking peace with Koizumi. And what happened was, Japan became a democracy.

These are historic times. We have an obligation and a duty to protect the American people. And we'll do just that. That's why Mark Kennedy needs to be in the United States Senate. And we have an opportunity—

and we have an historic opportunity to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. I'm absolutely convinced that someday, 50 or 60 years from now, an American President will be speaking to an audience saying, "Thank goodness a generation of Americans rose to the challenge and helped people be liberated from tyranny. Democracy spread, and the world is more peaceful for it."

And there's no doubt in my mind Mark Kennedy understands the stakes and shares the vision for laying that foundation for peace. He needs to be a United States Senator from the State of Minnesota.

I've enjoyed working with Mark Kennedy on economic matters. We share a philosophy that says this: The role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America.

We've been through some tough times in this country. As you might recall, we had a recession, some corporate scandals, an attack on our country, a war, major hurricanes. And yet the third quarter growth in 2005 was 4.3 percent. We've added 4.5 million jobs since May of 2003. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is 3.7 percent. The unemployment rate nationally is 5 percent. Homeownership is at an alltime high. More minorities own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. This economy is strong, and it's going to be stronger.

And one reason it's strong is we cut the taxes on the people. We understand that when somebody has got more money to spend or save, this economy is going to grow. And Mark Kennedy understands that. He also understands that we must have certainty in the Tax Code. We need to make the tax cuts we passed permanent. By the way, when you hear somebody say, "Don't make the tax cuts permanent," that's Washington, DC, code for saying, "We're going to raise your taxes." [Laughter] That's what that is.

And the other thing we've done is, we've worked hard to make sure that we've been wise about how we spend your money. Each year we've cut the rate of growth of nonsecurity discretionary spending. I'm hoping to sign a series of appropriation bills that will actually have negative growth in nondis-

cretionary—in nonsecurity discretionary spending, the first time since Ronald Reagan was the President. Mark Kennedy is a fiscal conservative. He is a CPA. It seems like to me we got enough lawyers in the United States Senate; why shouldn't we have a CPA in the United States Senate?

I want to talk about a couple of more issues. We got a farm bill coming up. This is an important farm State. It seems like to me you want to have a United States Senator who can come in the Oval Office and talk to the President about Minnesota farmers. We passed a good farm bill. I want to thank Mark for working on it. And in that farm bill was not only a safety net for our farmers but a commitment to open up markets for Minnesota farmers. Here's what I think. I think if you're good at something, like the Minnesota farmers are, they ought to be given opportunity to sell product all across the world.

In the farm bill, there was a strong conservation title called the CRP program. It's good for Minnesota ranchers and farmers. If you're interested in a strong ag economy like we got today, if you're a Minnesota farmer, there's only one man suited to be the United States Senator in this race, and that's Mark Kennedy.

Health care is an issue. It's an issue for patients. It's an issue for docs. It's an issue for small-business owners. We intend to do something about it. There's a philosophical divide, however, and there will be one in this race. There are some who believe that the Government ought to be making all the decisions. And there's people like Mark and I who believe that the best decisionmaking in health care is between the patient and the doctor. And that's why we strongly support health savings accounts, associated health plans for small businesses, community health centers, a reformed Medicare program.

But I want to talk about one other issue in health care. You cannot have affordable and available health care if your doctors are getting sued all the time. We got a problem in this country. We got too many docs being run out of the practice of medicine because of these junk lawsuits. And you're paying for it twice. You're paying for it as a result of higher doctor bills when you go to the office,

and you're paying for it through higher—because the Federal Government has got a huge, huge share of health care spending.

See, when I first went to Washington, I said, "Well, this is a local issue. The Governors can take care of it." But then I realized all these frivolous lawsuits and the defensive practice of medicine and the increase of premiums for docs are costing us billions of dollars a year at the Federal level—through Medicaid, Medicare, and veterans spending, for example. So medical liability is a national problem that requires a national solution. And I look forward to working with United States Senator Mark Kennedy to make sure health care is available and affordable for Minnesota patients.

There are three branches of Government, as you know. Well, some of them back there think there's four branches. [*Laughter*] The Constitution recognizes three branches. [*Laughter*] I'm proudly part of the executive branch. You'll be proudly part of the—he is a part of the legislative branch. And we've got to make sure that the judiciary—judicial branch of Government functions the way the framers of our Constitution wanted it to function, and that is to have people who serve on our bench who are not going to try to legislate but who will strictly interpret the Constitution of the United States of America.

I look forward to working with the United States Senator Mark Kennedy, who will make sure that the judges I name, those strict constructionists, those who will not try to legislate from the bench, are given an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate and confirmed—judges like John Roberts and Judge Sam Alito.

So I've come to thank you for supporting a good man. I've come to lay out my opinion, and that is, he's the right person for the job. He thinks right. He acts right. He's not one of these kind of politicians that takes a poll and then tries to figure out what to believe. We got too many of those in Washington, DC. We need straight shooters, people of principle, and people who care deeply about the State of Minnesota. And that person is Mark Kennedy.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senatorial candidate Kennedy's wife, Debbie, and his daughter, Sarah; Gov. Timothy Pawlenty and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Rudy Boschwitz, head of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

December 4

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Kennedy Center Honors Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

December 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Greensboro, NC, where, upon arrival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Winfield Rose.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kernersville, NC, where he participated in a tour of the John Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery Corp. excavator assembly line. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

December 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a hurricane briefing. Later, in the Yellow Oval Room, he and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview and photo shoot with *People* magazine.